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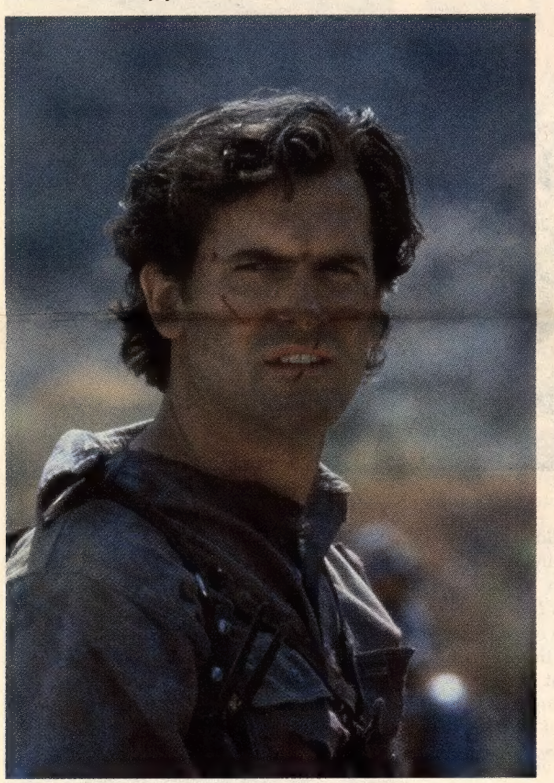
C!N
Army of Darkness • Xena: Why Not?

Why Not, Indeed?

Ashley Williams has confronted Marvel Zombies. He's faced off against both Freddy and Jason. He's thwarted the efforts of the Re-Animator. But none of these experiences have prepared him for what he's about to face when he meets a warrior princess... and a rogue who looks an awful lot like him!

The title says it all: ***Army of Darkness/Xena: Why Not?*** Even the name of the series acknowledges the reaction that Dynamite Entertainment anticipates from its readers when they first hear of the most surprising meeting in Ash's unpredictable career. So what led to the decision to bring together two such disparate properties? "Well, both ***Army of Darkness*** and ***Xena*** have a couple of common threads," Dynamite's *Joe Rybandt* said, "one being *Sam Raimi* (who produced the ***Xena*** series) and the other being *Bruce Campbell* (who portrayed Autolycus in the ***Xena*** television series). When we thought about the titles from that perspective, it gave us our 'in.' From there, our creative team took our pairing and really turned it into something that fans of both titles can enjoy. "



Was the crossover a tough sell, or did Dynamite get an immediate "go for it" response as soon as you pitched the concept to the studios? "I don't recall any hesitation from either Universal (***Xena***) or MGM (***Army of Darkness***)," Rybandt said, "but interestingly enough, this crossover has been in the works long before ***Army of Darkness/Marvel Zombies*** or ***Freddy Vs. Jason Vs. Ash***, so the concept of throwing Ash around the various comic book universes, which is now more accepted, was not as fully realized when we thought up ***Army of Darkness/Xena***. Ash laid the ground work himself for this one to happen… he's clever that way."

If this crossover predates Ash's other recent multi-concept miniseries, then where exactly does it fit into continuity? "The continuity's a little loose, but when you're dealing with time travel and demonic portals, that's bound to happen," Rybandt said. "The crossover with ***Marvel Zombies*** was in direct ***Army of Darkness*** continuity, but the ***Freddy Vs. Jason Vs. Ash*** Wildstorm series and this series with ***Xena*** are not tied in directly. This allows easy entry to the minis and then the series, should fans want to check out what we're doing in the main ***Army of Darkness*** book because of what they read in a crossover."

So are there other crossovers in the works—if there's anyone left for Ash to cross over with, that is? "I think our approach is more like, is there anything he *can't* cross-over with… because really, Ash is an everyman who ends up in fantastic situations. This is what's made not only our series a success (and running in some form or fashion for over three years), but all of these crossovers successful and true fan-favorites."

Part of the challenge for artist *Miguel Montenegro* was to capture the differing look of both fictional worlds. "The story takes place in Xena's world, with Ash literally crashing in it," Montenegro said. "I thought he should bring some of the darkness from his universe with him, so the artwork is a little heavier and darker than it would be if this was just a ***Xena*** book. This is particularly more acute in the first issue, where we see a bit more of Ash´s world. In the end, I think we were able to get a compromise somewhere in between both atmospheres."

Army of Darkness/Xena: Why Not? #1, a $2.99 comic illustrated by *Miguel Montenegro*, is scheduled for late March release; the book will be offered with two different covers, one by UDON, and the other by *Fabiano Nieves*. The first three issues are written by *John Layman*, while the final installment is written by *Brandon Jerwa*.

by Cliff Biggers

Why Not Go Straight to the Source?

What's the best way to find out what's going on in ***Army of Darkness/Xena: Why Not?*** By asking Ashley Williams himself, of course! The folks at Dynamite managed to find a few moments between Deadite attacks for Ash to entertain a few questions... along with some heckling from an unexpected guest!

CSN: First things first--do you *ever* stay home? Marvel Zombies, Freddy & Jason, Xena... that's a lot of travelling in one year! Doesn't it make it hard to hold down a job when you're constantly phoning in to report that you're busy in another reality?

Ashley J. Williams: "See, sparky, thing is that Ash Williams calls the shots when it comes to the ol' day job. Those chuckle-heads at S-Mart Worldwide Headquarters have realized that no one store can hold the man down, so I'm, like, a freelance, only with benefits and preferred parking. I wander the 53 states of the Good Ol' US of A fixing problems. Housewares Problems. That's the easy part—hard part is keeping this damned dead book off my ass!..."

CSN: So what's going on here--how and why do you end up in Xena's world, and what's the reason for your being there?

Ash: "Who knows why I end up *anywhere*! I mean, one minute I'm minding my own business, trying to get a little something going with a cute chickie-poo from Seasonal—and the next I'm in a friggin' toga party! I mean, I'd always heard the Roman Bath House down on 3rd was a good place to go and unwind, but it doesn't mean I want to *move in*, ya know? To find out how it is I get anywhere, ya should be interviewing the book with the skin condition, that thing—"

Necronomicon: "Silence, flesh-bag!"

Ash: "Yeah right, this thing that *never* shuts up clams up when the ***60 Seconds*** crew gets up in its face for an interview. Fan-freakin'-tastic. Damn book… mutter, mutter..."

CSN: Okay, what's the story here--Xena? Any chemistry? Does she find your irresistible?

Ash: "You kidding me? Does the pope crap in the woods? That chick and her little friend—what's her name, Abby something?—they were *mighty* fine. They didn't go for the Ash-man right away—but like a fine imported malt liquor, I get better the more time you spend with me… or if ya drink me real fast!"

CSN: What's the scoop on this Autolycus guy? Does it bug you that there's a certain similarity in appearance here?

Ash: "When the big man made me, I thought he broke the mold! *Haw!* This Autolickus guy must be some sort of long-lost relative, because there is *no way* this chin looks that good on anyone not of the Williams family stump!"

CSN: Is Xena's world a place you could consider calling home?

Ash: "Well, ya know, I definitely left my mark by the end of my little 'adventure,' but I need more modern conveniences, like microwave burritos and message boards. All they do back in the 'olde' times is run around in sandals and skirts—and I graduated to big boy pants years ago."

CSN: Any other travel plans on your itinerary for 2008?

Ash: "Ask the book!… I do all my travel planning with Captain Kirk over at that Pricefine site… I was just looking at a long weekend out by the lake, cabin-style, going Old School for a few days…"

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Byrne-ing up the Comics Racks

John Byrne may have reduced his workload a bit in 2007, but he's coming back with a vengeance in 2008, producing stories and art for IDW and DC—and reuniting with a collaborative partner to present an original tale of DC's premiere super-team.

The first two parts of Byrne's collaboration with writer *Roger Stern* can be found in ***JLA Classified #s 50 & 51***, both of which should be in comic shops right now. In the near future, his first-ever ***Star Trek*** work should appear in the ***Star Trek Alien Spotlight: Romulans*** oneshot. Then, in March, Byrne joins with writer *Wayne Osborne* to kick off the six-part ***FX*** from IDW. And if that's not enough, Byrne is also preparing a hefty black-and-white compendium, ***John Byrne's Compleat Next Men***—and possibly a continuation of ***Next Men*** in a new IDW series!

Perhaps the most unusual project on Byrne's agenda is ***FX***, which he is illustrating on commission for series creator *Wayne Osborne*. Did Byrne take on the assignment just for the money? "Well, it wasn't *not* about the money!" Byrne told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Benjamin Ong Pang Kean*. "For twenty years or more I have been putting out this general offer -- for X amount of dollars, I will create a whole comic book, just for you! I assumed someone would come along and ask for Batman vs. Iron Fist or something of that nature, but Wayne had his own characters he wanted to see me draw. Initially, it was just the one issue. Then Wayne got himself a publisher, and asked me to do five more."

Did it seem odd for Byrne, acclaimed as both a writer and an artist, to move into "illustrator for hire" territory with ***FX?*** " I went into this with some degrees of apprehension, to be sure. I expected to earn every cent of my fee! But I was able to persuade Wayne to approach this 'Marvel Style'-- plot, art, script -- and that eliminated about 90% of the mistakes newbie writers make... [Wayne] has a very clear vision of his characters. I tossed in a few ideas along the way, which he incorporated, but mostly everything on the page is who he wanted those people to be."

Byrne is not only pencilling the series, but inking it as well. "This is the first job I have inked for a while, excluding private commissions, and I am seeing quite a dramatic shift in the line," Byrne said. "Mostly, this is due to the PITT pens I now use, but also I think doing the oversize commissions has refined my line."

Byrne is also producing a four-page Lorne story for IDW's ***Angel*** series, which he's doing as a "favor to Chris [Ryall, IDW editor-in-chief], mostly." As to what it's about, Byrne said only that "it's set in Hell. 'Nuff said!"

Byrne explained how IDW also become the home for the ***Next Men*** "phone book" compendium. "They asked, I said 'sure!" (I am doing serious damage to my rep as an absolute ogre to work with here, aren't I?)"

Byrne has other ***Next Men*** tales in the planning stages, but as to whether they'll see print or not, "that's sort of what the 'phonebooks will discover," Byrne said. "Chris and I have talked about continuing Next Men at IDW, but it will all come down to how the 'phonebooks' do."

Is a collection of the ***Next Men*** prequel/sequel ***2112*** also in the works? "That is my understanding," Byrne said. "I look forward to seeing that in black and white, actually. I think it may look better that way."

What about Byrne's other creator-owned projects like ***Danger Unlimited, Babe,*** and ***Lab Rats?*** "We're planning a "phonebook" of the other 'Byrne-verse' stuff. An anthology volume, with ***DU, Babe***, etc all between the same covers."

While Byrne is working with *Roger Stern* on the ***JLA Classified*** arc that marks the end of that series, he has no plans for other DC work at the time—and that's sure to be a disappointment to fans of his ***Generations*** projects that have looked at the future of the Superman-Batman team in the DC Universe. "The Powers That Are have said no more Generations, as they don't want to do 'imaginary stories' for a while..."

Has Byrne ever considered retiring from comics, the field in which the 57-year-old creator has worked for over three decades? "Based on the experience of those who came before me, I would say this is not an industry from which one 'retires,'" Byrne said. "There are those who can always find work, and there are those who are involuntarily shoved aside. Which I turn out to be, only time will tell."

CSNsider

•***World of Warcraft #2*** has followed in the footsteps of the first issue, selling out of its first printing. A second edition, featuring a black and white version of *Jim Lee's* cover art, is tentatively scheduled to reach comic shops this week. "The coolest thing about seeing this book do well is that in an extremely small way, I'm getting to contribute something to the lore of Warcraft that will become a part of its history," writer *Walt Simonson* said.

•***Dan Dare #1*** has sold out of a hefty overprinting; Virgin Comics has no current plans for a second printing, but they *are* making the issue available at their www.virgin-comics.com website for readers who'd like to catch up before picking up later issues at their friendly neighborhood comic shop.

•***Blackbeard: Legacy,*** originally released by Alias Comics before that publisher left mainstream comics, has found a new home at Bluewater. Pirates, zombies, secret treasures—it's all in the relaunched series, which begins with a new first issue in the next couple of weeks, courtesy of writer *Eric Arvin* and artist *Nicolas R. Giacondino*. "What makes this ***Blackbeard: Legacy*** different from the last in the series is its sense of humor and adventure," Arvin said. "I wanted to create a more Odyssey-like story with a few surprises thrown in that the readers of

my other books and short stories might appreciate." Later this year, the original miniseries is slated to be collected in trade paperback by Atomic Pop Art.

•***Infinite Horizon #1*** has sold out, but Image is sending the book back to press for a second printing that should be in comic shops at about the same time as this issue of *CSN;* the new cover by series artist *Phil Noto* should make it easy to spot.

•*Filip Sablik* has been promoted to publisher of Top Cow Productions, where he'll report directly to Top Cow president *Matt Hawkins*. "Having Filip in place will allow me to expand our efforts in other media, which in turn strengthens our publishing base. We're at a real turning point in Top Cow's history with three hit properties in three different media and it's time to strike while the iron is hot!"

•Three more "Resurrection of Ra's Al Ghul" installments get resurrected in the next week

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or so, as DC goes back to press on ***Robin #169, Nightwing #139,*** and ***Detective Comics #839. Robin*** will feature a recolored version of the cover by *Andy Kubert; **Nightwing*** will feature a recolored version of the cover by *Adam Kubert;* and ***Detective*** will feature a new cover by *Rafa Garres.* (For those who are keeping count, this means that every installment of the seven-part story, along with both prequels, have gone into multiple printings.)

•***Great Expectations*** joins PaperCutz' ***Classics Illustrated*** line in April; the 56-page hardcover reprints the long-unavailable adaptation by *Rick Geary,* best known for his work on ***Treasury of Victorian Murder.***

•Readers who couldn't get enough of Top Cow's ***First Born*** series can look forward to March, when the publisher releases ***First Born: Aftermath,*** a special oneshot epilogue that will appear at the same time as the trade paperback of the 2007 ***First Born*** event. ***First Born: Aftermath*** features stories by *Ron Marz* and *Phil Hester,* with art by *Ryan Sook* and *Lee Moder,* along with a special painted sequence by *First Born* artist *Stjepan Sejic.* Marz and Sook present a special Magdalena tale, while Hester and Moder introduce a new villain for The Darkness.

•Devil's Due has tapped *Brian Warmoth* to serve as their new marketing manager.

•*Robert Kirkman* has confirmed that he is leaving ***Ultimate X-Men*** after he wraps up his "Apocalypse" story arc in ***UXM #93.*** "This arc is something my run on the book has been building toward since I was given the regular writing assignment with issue 75," Kirkman wrote on his blog. "Everything I've done in the book thus far has been building to this and the thought of continuing after I'd completed my grand plan seemed like overstaying my welcome, frankly. I will have said everything I wanted and done everything I set out to do… so it seemed the time was right."

•A couple of weeks ago, ***CSN*** told you about ***Cerebus*** creator *Dave Sim's* new secret project. Now we can reveal more: the book is called ***Glamourpuss,*** and while it appears on the surface to be a satirical spoof of the fashion industry, it also serves as a vehicle for Sim to comment on and pay tribute to classic comic strips and art by such creators as *Alex Raymond, Stan Drake,* and *Al Williamson.* While the disconnect between words and pictures can be jarring at times, the end result is a fascinating look into the creative mind of one of the field's most distinctive talents. Look for ***Glamourpuss #1*** in March; the second issue will follow in June, after which the book will maintain a bi-monthly schedule.

Zuda's Kickoff Ten for 2008

DC has announced the ten entries that have made it into their first Zudacomics.com contest of 2008. Readers are invited to check out the web comics and vote for their favorite; the winner will continue as a regular web comic on the site and will later be collected in print form. The ten entries include:

•***A Spelunker's Guide to the City*** (*Gary Epting*) - There's a new Evil M in Null City, and his name is Odile Moiré

•***Absurdity at Its Best*** (*Victor Bonilla*) - Everyone needs a *little* absurdity in his daily life...

•***Danetropolis*** (*David Daneman*) - In the world of Danetropolis, David Daneman is king, jester, the cop on the street, and that guy talking to David Daneman on the train...

•***Demons in the Closet*** (*John Zakour*) - A boy discovers that his little sister's closet is a nexus to another dimension filled with "demons"

•***Legend of the Fool King*** (*Alexander Kanaris-Sotiriou*) - Destiny forces a lowly jester into the role of heroic savior in a fantasy romp

•***Pieces of Eden*** (*Seth Sherwood*) - The survivor of a serial killer discovers that she has absorbed little pieces of the other victims' personalities

•***Supertron*** (*Sheldon Vella*) - In a future ruled by robots lives Supertron, a robot of unprecedented power and wit

•***Thomas: Agent of Chaos*** (*Larry Jamal Walton*) - Wonder why kids bring major changes to the lives of their parents? Meet Thomas, Agent of Chaos, and find out...

•***Untrue Tales*** (*Sam Little*) - Enjoy the untrue tales of Gabriel Stein—his life, his loves, his string of failures

•***Urbis Faerie*** (*Robert Richardson*) - A young woman's life is complicated when her evil parents demand she leave a town where everyone is descended from fantasy creatures and come back to live with them

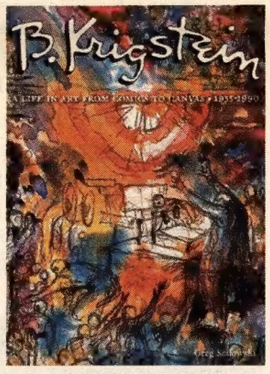
Fantagraphics Fills Out Its Schedule

Fantagraphics has revealed details of its publishing schedule for April through August of 2008, and it features some surprises and a few eagerly-awaited gems. Highlights include:

•***Abandoned Cars,*** a collection of *Tim Lane's* noir tales *(May)*

•***Amor Y Cohetes,*** the last volume in *Gilbert, Jaime & Mario Hernandez's* reformatted ***Love & Rockets*** series *(June)*

•***Billy Hazelnuts & the Crazy Bird,*** *Tony Millionaire's* sequel to his 2006 children's tale *(May)*



•***B. Krigstein Volume II: A Life in Art from Comics to Canvas (1955-1990),*** the second volume in *Greg Sadowski's* look at the life and career of the acclaimed EC artist *(August)*

•***The Bottomless Belly Button,*** a graphic novel by up-and-coming talent *Dash Shaw (June)*

•***Chocolate Cheeks,*** a collection of ***Yikes*** gag strips by *Steven Weissman (July)*

•***The Clouds Above,*** a softcover edition of *Jordan Crane's* all-ages tale *(April)*

•***Comic Arf,*** an eclectic anthology edited by *Craig Yoe (May)*

•***Comics Journal #290,*** which features an exclusive interview with the legendary *Maurice Sendak (April)*

•***The Complete Peanuts 1967-1968,*** collecting some of *Charles Schulz's* most fondly remembered ***Peanuts*** strips *(April)*

•***The Education of Hopey Glass,*** collecting *Jaime Hernandez's* recent ***Love & Rockets*** tales *(April)*

•***Hall of Best Knowledge,*** a collection of *Ray Fenwick's* "typographical comics" *(April)*

•***Hank Ketcham's Complete Dennis the Menace Volume One,*** a softcover edition of the earliest installments of Ketcham's classic strip *(June)*

•***Humbug,*** a slipcased two-volume set collecting *Harvey Kurtzman's* acclaimed but short-lived magazine, which includes material by *Jack Davis, Will Elder, Al Jaffee, Arnold Roth,* and Kurtzman himself *(August)*

•***Jessica Farm,*** the first installment of *Josh Simmons* promises-to-be-epic tale of a night-marish house *(April)*

•***Krazy & Ignatz 1943-1944: "He Nods in Quiescent Siesta,"*** the final volume collecting the ***Krazy Kat*** work of *George Herriman (August)*

•***Man of Rock: A Biography of Joe Kubert,*** a look at the creator and his sixty-plus year career, courtesy of *Bill Schelly (July)*

•***Mome Summer and Fall,*** another offbeat collection of material from the artsy crowd *(May)*

•***More Old Jewish Comedians,*** a sequel to last year's ***Blab!*** book by *Drew Friedman (April)*

•***Most Outrageous: The Trials & Trespasses of Dwaine Tinsley & Chester the Molester,*** *Bob Levin's* examination of the troubled life of ***Hustler*** cartoonist Tinsley *(May)*

•***Our Gang Volume Three,*** a trade paperback collecting more Little Rascals tales by *Walt Kelly (May)*

•***Pocket Full of Rain & Other Stories,*** collecting Norwegian cartoonist *Jason's* early material *(June)*

•***Rebel Visions: The Underground Comix Revolution 1963-1975,*** a softcover edition of *Patrick Rosenkranz's* history of undergrounds *(May)*

•***So That's Where the Demented Wented: The Comics & Art of Rory Hayes,*** collecting the works of one of the most distinctive and quirky talents of the underground movement *(June)*

•***Strange & Stranger: The World of Steve Ditko,*** the long-awaited retrospective look at Ditko and his work by *Blake Bell (June)*

•***Town of Mirrors: The Reassembled Imagery of Robert Pollard,*** a collection of photo collages by the lead singer of Guided by Voices *(June)*

•***The Troublemakers,*** a hard-boiled original graphic novel by *Gilbert Hernandez (June)*

Viz Thinks Big

Viz, the company that revolutionized the manga field with its compact English-language editions of Japanese best-sellers, offers readers a chance to see the bigger picture with the release of their new VizBig imprint. Each book in the line will be larger than the usual manga (5.75" x 8.65" rather than the usual 5" x 7.5" manga size), with special features and new cover art.

The line will kick off with the ***Rurouni Kenshin VizBig Edition*** in late March, followed by ***Dragonball and Dragonball Z*** in May and ***Vagabond*** in the fall. Each book will collect the first three volumes of the original manga series in a larger trim size along with bonus color pages and added content that includes author interviews, updated text, and character art.

"VizBig Editions are more than just an alternative format to read your favorite manga," Viz Media Vice President of Publishing *Alvin Lu* said. "With full color pages, eye-opening larger trim size, and a premium presentation, they change the very experience of reading manga. For fans of these series, they are a great opportunity to relive their favorite stories from a completely new perspective—and for new fans, this is a great way to jump in and quickly get up to speed on what everyone's been talking about.."

Top Comics for Feb

24: COLD WARRIORS

Beau Smith (W); Steve Bryant (A)
(IDW DEC073744 $7.49)

What's the Scoop?

Snowbound at a remote Alaskan communications station, Jack Bauer and Chloe try to stop a Russian terrorist from bringing down US wireless communication.

Why Should You Care?

Thanks to the writer's strike, this is the only new 24 you're gonna get this season!

ASTRO CITY: THE DARK AGE SPECIAL #2: BEAUTIE

Kurt Busiek (W); Brent Anderson (A)
(WildStorm/DC DEC070276 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The life-sized super-powered fashion-doll member of Honor Guard isn't sure who she is, where she came from, or where she belongs... but she's determined to find out.

Why Should You Care?

Busiek & Anderson blend superheroics and human interest in every issue of their compelling ensemble-cast drama—and while we may not get issues as frequently as we'd like, they're always worth the wait!

BOOSTER GOLD #0

Geoff Johns & Jeff Katz (W); Dan Jurgens & Norm Rapmund (A)
(DC DEC070197 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Booster Gold journeys the timeline with his best friend in tow--but their attempts to return home bring them face to face with one of the greatest villains of the DC Universe: Hal Jordan, aka Parallax!

Why Should You Care?

If anyone can tell a great Hal Jordan story, it's ***Booster Gold*** co-writer *Geoff Johns*, who's also the mastermind behind Hal's monthly title!

CLANDESTINE #1 (OF 5)

Alan Davis (W/A)
(Marvel DEC072179 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

For centuries, this mysterious bloodline of superhumans has tried to lead a private life outside of the spotlight... but the secretive clan is threatened with exposure when one of their youngest siblings follows his dream to become a costumed crimefighter.

Why Should You Care?

Alan Davis focuses on both the super and the human in this distinctive look at a super-powered clan—but the real draw is Davis's stunning artwork, of course!

FANTASTIC FOUR #554

Mark Millar (W); Bryan Hitch (A)
(Marvel DEC072181 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Who is Mrs. Fantastic, and how will her return into Reed's life shake up the FF? And what's this about the Invisible Woman's *new* super-team?

Why Should You Care?

Warren Ellis & Bryan Hitch launch their run on Marvel's flagship title—and they're determined to make it "the world's greatest comic magazine" once again.

FANTASTIC FOUR: LOST ADVENTURE

Stan Lee & Jack Kirby (W); Jack Kirby, Joe Sinnott, & John Buscema (A)
(Marvel DEC072182 $4.99)

What's the Scoop?

The 103rd issue of *Stan Lee & Jack Kirby's* 102 issue ***Fantastic Four*** run sees print at last!

Why Should You Care?

The publication of a never-before-seen-in-its-entirety *Stan Lee-Jack Kirby-Joe Sinnott* issue of ***FF*** is reason a'plenty—but this issue also includes reproductions of Kirby's uninked pencil pages with border notes and analysis by *John Morrow*, along with a reprint of the complete ***FF #108*** by *Stan Lee & John Buscema*, which includes excerpts from this story in flashback.

GIANT SIZE ASTONISHING X-MEN #1

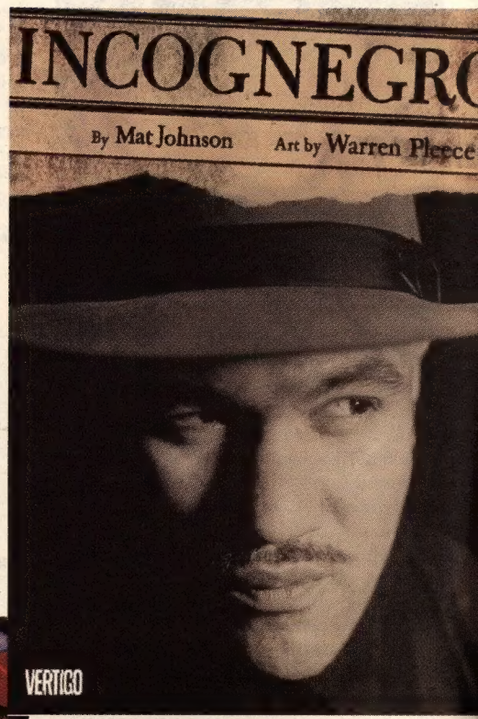
Joss Whedon (W); John Cassaday (A)
(Marvel DEC072218 $4.99)

What's the Scoop?

The X-Men face off against the power-lords of Breakworld in the final installment of *Joss Whedon & John Cassaday's* acclaimed run.

Why Should You Care?

Whedon & Cassaday have made ***Astonishing X-Men*** the best mutant title on the stands—and they go out in style with this extra-length issue that includes interviews with both creators.



INCOGNEGRO HC

Mat Johnson (W); Warren Pleece (A)
(Vertigo/DC OCT070243 $19.99)

What's the Scoop?

A light-skinned black man is forced to pass for white in order to investigate a murder in early-20th-century Mississippi... a murder for which his own brother has been charged—and may be lynched unless Zane Pinchback can learn the identity of the real killer.

Why Should You Care?

Mat Johnson, winner of the prestigious Hurston-Wright Legacy Award for fiction, presents a provocative graphic novel that blends mystery and social commentary.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #18

Dwayne McDuffie & Alan Burnett (W); Ed Benes & Jonboy Meyers (A)
(DC DEC070230 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Justice League take on the Suicide Squad... and the fate of the Earth's villains is at stake!

Why Should You Care?

Following in the footsteps of *Brad Meltzer* is a challenge for any writer—but *Dwayne McDuffie* has proven himself up for the task, making ***Justice League of America*** more exciting than ever.

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KICK ASS #1

Mark Millar (W); John Romita Jr. (A)

(Marvel/Icon DEC072235 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

What happens when an ordinary man puts on a costume and decides to face off against criminals? It's not all fame and glory, that's for sure...

Why Should You Care?

Mark Millar & John Romita Jr. offer a brutally realistic look at the hard-hitting world of costumed crimefighters in this book that epitomizes grim and gritty.

MAGDALENA/ DAREDEVIL

Phil Hester (W); Phil Hester & Ande Parks (A)

(Image DEC072120 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

When an ancient demon is determined to settle scores with the Catholic Church, it's up to the Magdalena and Daredevil to keep the faith.

Why Should You Care?

In a field overpopulated with generic, lackluster crossover stories, Top Cow's Marvel crossover books have a refreshingly distinctive quality that captures the essence of both fictional worlds.

RASL #1

Jeff Smith (W/A)

(Cartoon DEC073519 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

Being an art thief is a tough way to earn a living... but it's a bit easier when you can travel between dimensions! Things don't always go as planned, though—as Rasl discovers when he faces an assassin's bullet.

Why Should You Care?

Jeff Smith, creator of the award-winning ***Bone,*** is back with an all-new science-fiction series—his first major creator-owned work since ***Bone*** wrapped up a half-decade ago!

SISTERHOOD #1 (OF 3)

Christopher Golden & Tom Sniegoski (W); Wellington Alves (A)

(Archaia DEC073394 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a unique group of specially trained nuns who destroy demons by drawing the creatures into their own bodies. If they die a natural death, the demons die with them—but if they die violently, the demons are released... and someone is determined to make a lot of sisters die very violently...

Why Should You Care?

Christopher Golden & Tom Sniegoski, no strangers to metaphysical horror-adventure, blend the supernatural edginess of Top Cow's finest with the action-adventure of ***Warrior Nun Areala.***

SPIRIT #14

Sergio Aragones & Mark Evanier (W); Mike Ploog (A)

(DC NOV070218 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Spirit and Commissioner Dolan continue to make Central City a safer place... but they're doing so with the help of a new creative team.

Why Should You Care?

Sergio Aragones & Mark Evanier are excellent choices to do the storytelling honors—but the selection of artist *Mike Ploog,* a one-time *Will Eisner* assistant, is positively inspired.

SPOOKS #1

R.A. Salvatore, Geno Salvatore, Ryan Schifrin, & Larry Hama (W); Adam Archer & Jonny Rench (A)

(Devil's Due DEC073581 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

When dangerous spooky things go bump in the night, it's up to the secret branch known as Spooks to set things right and make the world safe for humanity.

Why Should You Care?

Military versus monsters—but in this case, the military characters are designed by ***G.I. Joe*** legend *Larry Hama,* while the monsters are masterminded by fantasy star *R.A. Salvatore.*

STAR TREK ALIENS SPOTLIGHT: ROMULANS

John Byrne (W/A)

(IDW DEC073730 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Romulan Empire has a new 'ghost ship' that can't be detected by normal means. Will the Praetor use it to launch full-blown war with the Federation—or are his motives even *more* sinister?

Why Should You Care?

Comics legend *John Byrne* boldly goes where no Byrne has gone before as he makes his ***Star Trek*** debut, both writing and illustrating this standalone oneshot.

STAR WARS: FORCE UNLEASHED GN

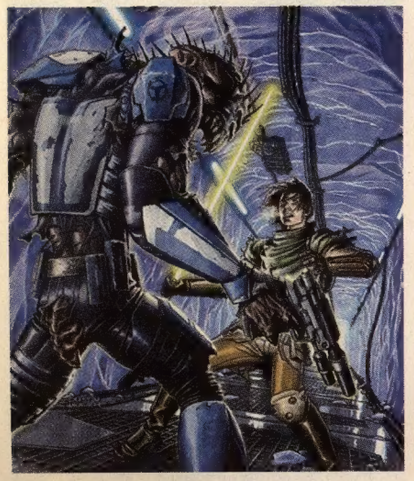
Haden Blackman (W); Brian Ching & David Ross (A)

(Dark Horse DEC070070 $15.95)

What's the Scoop?

Learn the origins of Darth Vader's secret apprentice in this original graphic novel inspired by LucasArts' latest ***Star Wars*** videogame.

Why Should You Care?
The *Force Unleashed* videogame is going to sell millions of copies—and a lot of those players are going to want to read this original graphic novel, written by the game's author, that presents the rest of the story that players *won't* find in the game.



STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF OLD REPUBLIC #26 VECTOR PART 2

John Jackson Miller (W); Scott Hepburn (A)
(Dark Horse DEC070071 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Fugitive Padawan Zayne Carrick leaps from one dangerous situation to another as he finds himself trapped in close quarters with a deadly agent of the group responsible for framing him to begin with!

Why Should You Care?
Knights #26 is the second pard of Dark Horse's first epic millennium-spanning ***Star Wars*** crossover tale ***Vector,*** which will involve every ***Star Wars*** series in the Dark Horse line.

X-FORCE #1

Craig Kyle & Christopher Yost (W); Clayton Crain (A)
(Marvel DEC072221 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
There are some lines that the X-Men have sworn never to cross—but the new X-Force isn't bound by those limitations...

Why Should You Care?
Wolverine, Warpath, X-23, and Wolfsbane comprise the no-holds-barred mutant wetworks team whose existence and methods must be kept secret— even from the X-Men themselves!

ZORRO #1

Matt Wagner (W); Francesco Francavilla (A)
(Dynamite DEC073535 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?
The masked hero of Old California is back in his own series.

Why Should You Care?
Matt Wagner's story does for Zorro what *John Cassaday & Brett Matthews* did for *The Lone Ranger*—bringing modern sensibilities and a contemporary approach to a timeless hero.

Check 'Em Out: Books You Should Be Reading

ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #11

(DC DEC070213 $4.99)

At long, long last, the extra-length conclusion to "Last Son" is here, courtesy of *Richard Donner, Geoff Johns, & Adam Kubert.*

BATMAN AND THE OUTSIDERS #4

(DC DEC070194 $2.99)

Green Arrow joins the Outsiders, almost a half-century after he joined the lineup of another prominent super-team in the fourth issue of their Silver Age series. But is his addition to the ranks of the Outsiders a good thing or a bad thing?

CLIVE BARKER'S AGE OF DESIRE HC

(Desperado DEC073572 $14.99)

P. Craig Russell & Timothy Bradstreet adapt *Clive Barker's* dark vision of the last days of a genetically altered and homicidally ecstatic sexual compulsive. This revised restores the original ending.

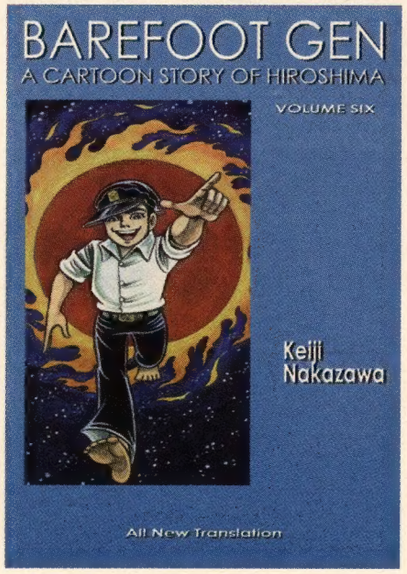
BAREFOOT GEN VOL 5 TP

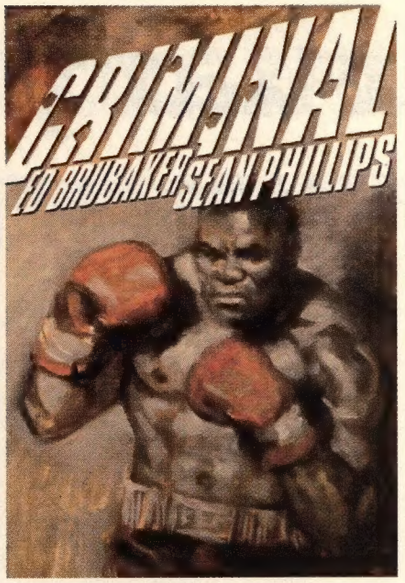
(Last Gasp DEC073795 $14.95)

BAREFOOT GEN VOL 6 TP

(Last Gasp DEC073796 $14.95)

Keiji Nakazawa's autobiographical look at life in post-atomic-bomb Japan continues in the latest volumes of the thought-provoking "I was there" saga.





CRIMINAL 2 #1

(Marvel/Icon DEC072234 $3.50)

Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips' gritty series relaunches with a new format, featuring more pages, longer main stories, and an expanded magazine section.

DISCOVERED TP: SCAD SEQUENTIAL ART ANTHOLOGY

(Top Shelf DEC073928 $9.95)

Get a first look at the next wave of comics talents in this anthology featuring 37 original stories created by students and alumni of the Savannah College of Art and Design.

PERHAPANAUTS ANNUAL #1

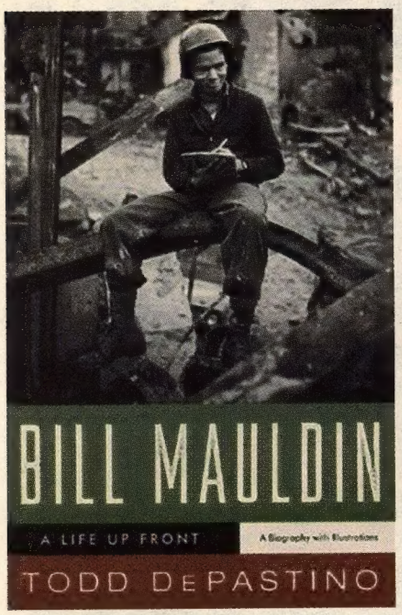
(Image DEC072048 $3.50)

They're agents waging a behind-the-scenes war against unseen horrors... but they're not quite normal themselves. *Todd Dezago & Craig Rousseau's* monster-heroes make the jump to Image with this extra-length special.

SCUD THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN #21

(Image DEC072049 $3.50)

It's a tale almost a decade in the making—but it's finally here! *Rob Schrab* kicks off the final Scud four-part arc in this long-overdue issue.



FYI: Great Additions to Your Reference Library

BILL MAULDIN LIFE UP FRONT HC

(WW Norton DEC074127 $27.95)

For years, *Bill Mauldin's* cartoons offered a powerful look at the human side of war. Now readers can learn about the man behind quintessential infantrymen Willie and Joe.

HI FI COLOR FOR COMICS DIGITAL TECHNIQUES

(Krause DEC074179 $24.99)

Learn how do take comics from black and white to glorious computerized color—and use the included Photoshop tools and actions to make the job easier!

ONE THOUSAND YEARS OF MANGA HC

(Random House DEC074140 $49.95)

Brigitte Koyama-Richard traces the history of manga from its earliest incarnation in the seventh century to its glorious present.

THIS BOOK CONTAINS GRAPHIC LANGUAGE: COMICS AS LITERATURE SC

(Continuum DEC074142 $19.95)

Forget plot synopses and checklists: this book offers a critical look at comics as literature, analyzing the various literary genres and forms found in comics, and the media's contribution to those genres.

Collected Cool: February's Best Reprint Volumes

DOOM PATROL ARCHIVES HC VOL 4

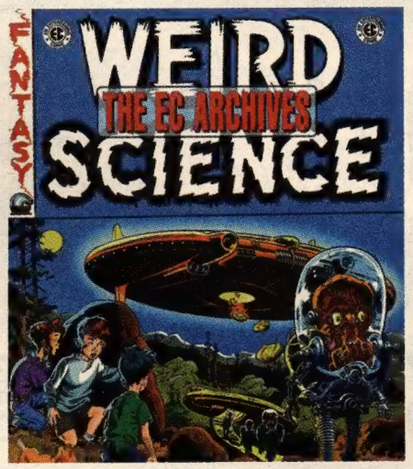
(DC OCT070191 $49.99)

The end of DC's Archives series seems to be imminent, but at least they're satisfying us longtime fans by completing this acclaimed series, which ended with a then-unheard-of event: the death of the entire team! Give it a try and see why ***Doom Patrol*** was sometimes described as "the only Marvel series published by DC."

EC ARCHIVES WEIRD SCIENCE HC VOL 3

(Gemstone DEC073672 $49.95)

Collects ***Weird Science #13-18,*** featuring some of the finest SF ever published in comics form, courtesy of *Wally Wood, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando,* and others.



GREEN LANTERN HC: SINESTRO CORPS WAR VOL 1

(DC OCT070196 $24.99)

Countdown was supposed to be DC's big event for the last half of 2007... but then *Geoff Johns* came along with ***Sinestro Corps War,*** and suddenly ***Green Lantern*** was the place to be!... This volume collects the first half of the saga, including ***Green Lantern #s 21-22, Green Lantern Corps #s 14-15,*** and ***Sinestro Corps Special #1.***

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA HC VOL 2: LIGHTNING SAGA

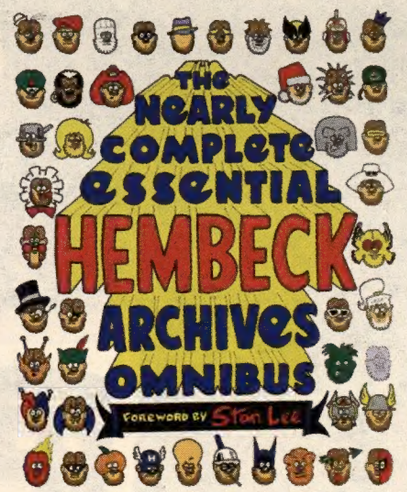
(DC OCT070192 $24.99)

The return of the *true* Legion of Super-Heroes. The resurrection of Wally West! It's all here in this *Geoff Johns-Brad Meltzer* collaboration, just as it originally appeared in ***Justice League #s 0 & 8-12*** and ***Justice Society #s 5-6.***

MARVEL MASTERWORKS ATLAS ERA HEROES HC VOL 2

(Marvel DEC072245 $59.99)

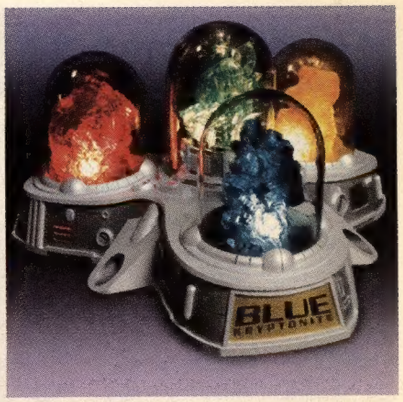
Marvel's first attempt at resurrecting its Golden Age characters is the focus of a second volume collecting Marvel's rarely-seen 1950s superhero tales from ***Men's Adventure #s 27-28, Captain America #s 76-78, Human Torch #s 36-38,*** and ***Marvel Super-Heroes #16.***



NEARLY COMPLETE ESSENTIAL HEMBECK ARCHIVES OMNIBUS

(Image DEC072064 $24.99)

What fan can resist this 900+ page love letter to comics? This doorstop of a book collects virtually every comics tribute *Fred Hembeck* ever produced in the 1980s and 1990s.



Hot Commodities: February's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

JLA TROPHY ROOM MULTI COLORED KRYPTONITE REPLICA

(DC Direct JUL070311 $250.00)

Add a Kryptonian glow to your collection with this prop containing four lighted forms of kryptonite (red, gold, blue, and green) in a unique glass-domed JLA Trophy Room display case.

KOTOBUKIYA PRESENTS BROWN WOLVERINE STATUE

(Diamond Select OCT073169 $250.00)

Japan's premiere sculptor of high-quality model kits and vinyl statues presents a stunning depiction of Logan in his brown-costumed glory, limited to only a thousand pieces.

ROBIN 13" COLLECTOR FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL070319 $69.99)

Batman's teen sidekick is the subject of DC's latest 1:6 scale realistically proportioned action figure, which comes complete with an authentically detailed fabric costume.

WOLVERINE CLASSIC ACTION STATUE

(Bowen DEC074429 $180.00)

No one can capture dynamic action with the elegance of Bowen Designs, as this striking statue of Wolverine in full claws-unsheathed fury so aptly demonstrates.

"THE BEST NEW SERIES IN YEARS. SPREAD THE WORD. TELL YOUR FRIENDS. TALK ABOUT IT. BLOG ABOUT IT."– GARTH ENNIS (PREACHER)

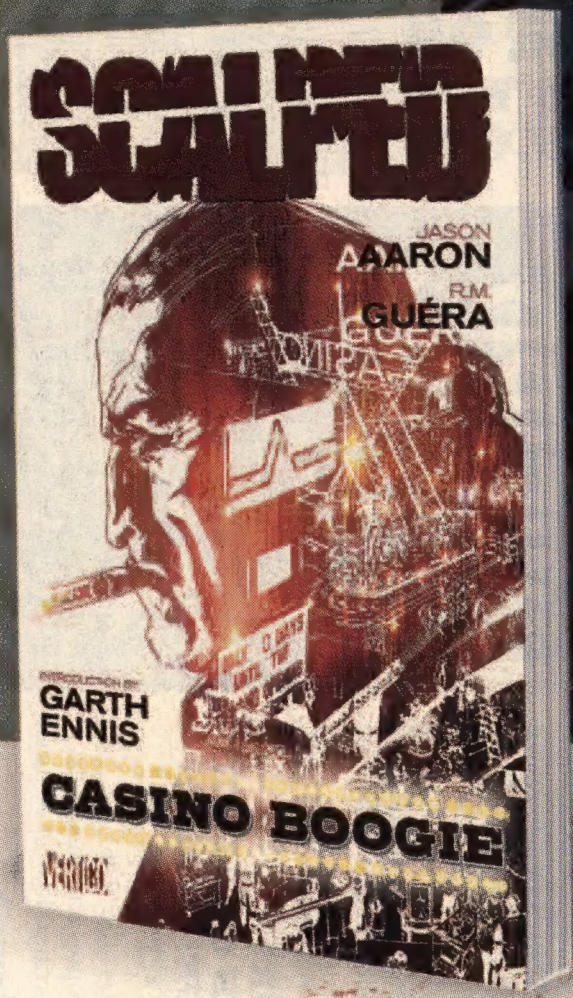
"THE RIVETING TALE OF ONE MEAN COP WITH A BIG DAMN SECRET."– BRIAN K. VAUGHAN (Y-THE LAST MAN)

"SOME OF THE MOST COMPELLING CHARACTER WORK AND CRIME WRITING I'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME."– ED BRUBAKER (CAPTAIN AMERICA)

"AS PERFECT A COMIC BOOK AS I'VE EVER READ." – BRIAN WOOD (DMZ)

THE SECOND GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTION OF THE ACCLAIMED SERIES

FEBRUARY 2008



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